



## ***AOT in Action***

### ***TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!***

*Issue 115 – July 3, 2006*

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good morning.

Last week, Governor Napolitano joined Phoenix Councilwoman Peggy Bilsten, Maricopa County Supervisor Fulton Brock, the Maricopa Association of Governments and the Arizona Department of Transportation to kick off “Don’t Trash Arizona,” a program designed to help us remember to keep our state beautiful by not littering. According to her message, ADOT spends an average of \$2.3 million per year just to remove litter from the freeway system, which is very costly to every state resident. By remembering to take pride in Arizona, we can also help keep the roads safer and help prevent forest fires (one cigarette can start a fire in these dry conditions). With so many of Arizona’s roads used by residents and visitors to experience all of Arizona’s amazing destinations, it is important to remember to keep our roads clean and enjoyable! I encourage you to spread the word about "Don't Trash Arizona" during our busy summer travel season. You can learn more about the project at [www.azgovernor.gov](http://www.azgovernor.gov).

Next week is our Governor’s Conference on Tourism, and there’s still time to register to attend. The conference starts on Monday, July 10 and runs through Wednesday, July 12. This is the industry’s largest event, and it is a great chance to network with industry members from throughout the state, learn about upcoming events and hear the latest research data and trends, all in the gorgeous Loews Ventana Canyon in Tucson. You can register online or find more information at [www.aztourismconference.com](http://www.aztourismconference.com). I hope to see you there!

Have a good week!



Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## **AOT News Flash**

### **Arizona Watchable Wildlife Tourism Association (AWWTA) Annual Meeting**

This year's annual meeting of the Arizona Watchable Wildlife Tourism Association (AWWTA) will be held at the Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Lowe's Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson on Monday, July 10. The meeting will take place in Salon 1 beginning at 2 p.m. For more information please contact Karen Bult, Tourism Education and Development Manager at (602) 364-3708 or by e-mail at [kbult@azot.gov](mailto:kbult@azot.gov).

### **Governor's Conference on Tourism**

It's not too late to register to attend the 2006 Governor's Conference on Tourism, which will be held at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson July 10-12. The conference will feature nationally-known speakers and the Arizona Office of Tourism's "State of the Industry Report" from Director Margie Emmermann, along with the Governor's Tourism Awards luncheon on Tuesday. For more information, visit [www.aztourismconference.com](http://www.aztourismconference.com) or call (602) 265-2252.

### **Rural Tourism Development Grant Program Fiscal Year 2007 – Coming Soon!**

The release of the Rural Tourism Development Grant Program (RTDGP) guidelines for fiscal year 2007 is coming soon! The primary objective of the competitive grant program is to provide coordinated funding for tourism related infrastructure projects. These funds assist rural economic development through tourism to strengthen the regional and local economies and expand tourism in rural and Tribal communities throughout Arizona. The primary function of the infrastructure project must be tourism development and the project must be designed to initiate economic growth and enhance future tourism development. For more information, please contact Karen Bult at [kbult@azot.gov](mailto:kbult@azot.gov).

### **Got Travel Agent Exposure?**

AOT will once again be producing the annual Arizona Sales Guides for the Canadian and US markets and now is the time to take advantage of this great advertising opportunity. The Arizona Sales guides are supplemental pieces designed for travel agent use in both

Canada and the United States and compliment the *Professional Travel Planner's Guide* to Arizona. The guides highlight the Arizona regions, what's new information, activities and events in a brief, easy-to-use supplement. The Canadian supplement will be released in the September issue of Canadian Traveller. The domestic supplement will be released in the January 15th issue of Travel Agent. Additional copies of the supplemental guides are distributed at trade shows and sales missions and used as additional fulfillment materials. Representatives from both publications will be exhibiting at the Governor's Conference on Tourism July 10-12 in Tucson. Please stop by their exhibits for further information and to discuss your advertising opportunities within these guides, or contact them prior to and after the conference. For Canadian Traveller, contact Stephen Fountaine at [stephenf@canadiantraveller.net](mailto:stephenf@canadiantraveller.net) or 250-861-9006. For Travel Agent, contact Chris Coon at [ccoona@questex.com](mailto:ccoona@questex.com) or 818-227-4070.

## Calling All Itineraries and Activities

Culinary Tourism is the latest market to emerge within the travel industry in years. The Arizona Office of Tourism wants to know how your community is promoting your culinary product around the state and is asking for itineraries and activities that revolve around a food or drink experience. The information will be promoted during trade shows and sales missions, and will be used to design new regional and statewide itineraries for our 2007 *Official State Visitors Guide*, *Professional Travel Planner's Guide* and Web site. Please send your information to Kristy McKinnon at [kmckinnon@azot.gov](mailto:kmckinnon@azot.gov) by July 7, 2006.

## Trippin' with AOT

### London Calling! Trade Show Opportunity

The Arizona Office of Tourism invites you to participate in World Travel Market 2006 in London, England from November 6th to November 9th. WTM is the premier, global event for the travel industry as well as the largest travel trade show in the United Kingdom. AOT's attendance at the show is extremely important because it raises Arizona awareness with travel industry and media professionals, generates sales leads and maintains status as a key player in the tourism industry. In 2005, there were 48,211 travel industry professionals and media in attendance.

The cost to participate is \$2,000 US for the primary delegate and \$500 US for the second delegate. Please contact Loretta Belonio for further information at [lbeldonio@azot.gov](mailto:lbeldonio@azot.gov) or 602-364-3725

## Wildfire Update

For the most current wildfire information for the state of Arizona, visit [www.az211.gov](http://www.az211.gov).

### Sedona Remains Untouched and Open for Business

Despite the recent Brins Fire, Sedona remains untouched except for a few strenuous hiking trails in Oak Creek Canyon. Sedona and Hwy 89A - Oak Creek Canyon is open for summer visitors. "The fire has affected about 4,000 acres - most of which are located in the remote Sterling and Wilson mountain areas, north of the city," says Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sedona Chamber of Commerce, Joel Gilgoff. "Hwy 89A running through Oak Creek Canyon – one of Arizona's most scenic roads – is open." Visitors may enjoy a scenic drive through Oak Creek Canyon and patronize the merchants located in the canyon. Even though many forest hiking trails are temporarily closed, there are still more than 102 Things to Do in the Sedona area. Sedona continues to offer specialty Jeep tours, scenic drives, recreation, cultural heritage sites, shopping, dining, and live performances at the many scenic venues throughout Sedona.

### **Grand Canyon's North Rim to Reopen Monday**

Grand Canyon National Park's North Rim and Arizona State Highway 67 will reopen to the public Monday, July 3, unless conditions change due to the Warm Fire. The North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park has been closed since Monday, June 26. The closure was precipitated by the Warm Fire which is about two miles south and east of Jacob Lake and approximately 30 miles north of the North Rim developed area. Both the North Rim of Grand Canyon and Highway 67 will reopen at 8:00 a.m. The North Kaibab Ranger District remains closed. The South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park remains open. All facilities and services on the South Rim are open and accessible. For additional park information, please call (928) 638-7888 or visit the park's Web site at [www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca).

### **Navajo Mountain Fire Enters Third Week**

The Navajo Mountain fire, now burning for about 2 ½ weeks, continues. The lightning caused fire has burned 3, 640 acres of rough terrain. The fire is being contained by three Navajo Scout Crews and several type one helicopters are doing bucket drops today. According to BIA Fire Management Service Incident Commander Dennis Teller, the crews are holding the fire in Horse Canyon on the south side of Navajo Mountain. The fire on the west side of the mountain is being contained by bucket drops.

## **Industry News**

### **Phoenix Art Museum Receives \$3 Million from Ellen & Howard C. Katz**

Phoenix Art Museum announced that it received a \$3.1 million gift from Ellen and Howard C. Katz for the new Ellen and Howard C. Katz Wing for Modern Art. The four-level gallery wing is one of the five major components in the Museum's current \$41.2 million expansion project. The public Grand Opening weekend is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, November 11 and 12, 2006. Phoenix Art Museum's collection spans the globe and the centuries, and includes over 17,000 works of art. Previously, the Museum

has been able to place on view only about 5 percent of those objects at any one time. The Ellen and Howard C. Katz Wing for Modern Art will add over 25,000 square feet of gallery space for art. It will provide the opportunity to Museum visitors to see more of the Museum's collection, particularly works from the growing collections of modern and contemporary art, Latin American art and fashion design. (Press Release, 6/23)

## **Senate Panel Votes to Delay WHTI**

The Senate Appropriations Committee on Thursday approved an amendment authored by Sens. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, to delay implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative for 17 months, until June 1, 2009, and to require the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State to certify to Congress that several standards are met before the program moves forward. The WHTI would require all Western Hemisphere travelers to carry a passport or other secure identification card beginning Jan. 1, 2008. A similar amendment to delay the WHTI was included in the Senate-passed immigration reform package. But because the future of that legislation is now clouded, the two senators worked to attach the amendment to must-pass legislation such as two appropriations bills. The move was applauded by the Travel Industry Association and the Travel Business Roundtable. ([www.ModernAgent.com](http://www.ModernAgent.com); Special to Travel Advance)

## **Scottsdale Hotels Undergoing Extensive Modern Makeovers**

The Scottsdale area has been hit with a flurry of development activity, including the mixed-used Waterfront project and five other major projects downtown. To keep pace with the progress, several hotels are getting upgrades. The former James Hotel is being converted by Morgans Hotel Group Co. into the Mondrian Scottsdale. Plans call for \$5 million in improvements to be completed before the end of the year. The Fairfield Inn is being converted to the Hotel Scottsdale after being purchased by Scottsdale Venetian Village LLC. The purchaser plans to invest more than \$3 million to convert the property into a mid-range boutique hotel. The Hampton Inn Scottsdale is being transformed to the Hotel Indigo brand. The property was purchased for \$12.5 million by Everest Hotels II LLC of Scottsdale from Equity Inns Partnership LP of Pennsylvania in an off-market transaction. Late last year, The Hotel Valley Ho opened in the city's downtown after an \$80 million makeover. The W Scottsdale Resort & Spa has added 225 rooms to the lodging market. And a Ritz-Carlton has been proposed near Lincoln Drive and Scottsdale Road. The Caleo Resort & Spa late last year was sold to Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants Group LLC. Hyatt Place is opening in Scottsdale in August. (Phoenix Business Journal, 6/26, [www.bizjournals.com/phoenix](http://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix))

## **Expedia, Inc . Partners with Hyatt Hotels & Resorts and Kimpton Hotels**

Building on their 10 years of association, Expedia, Inc. and Hyatt Hotels & Resorts have signed a new agreement to continue as distribution partners, as well as marketing partners. On Expedia increasingly strengthening its hotel supplier relationships through

long-term contract commitments, Paul Brown, President, Partner Services Group, Expedia said, "From being the first hotel company to join Expedia in a marketing partnership to being the first to participate in our direct connect program for hotels, Hyatt exemplifies the long-term, mutually beneficial relationships Expedia strives for with our partners." Expedia also has a long-term agreement with Kimpton Hotels, which gives Expedia direct connectivity providing customers with greater access to Kimpton inventory and rates. (Source: [www.Expedia.com](http://www.Expedia.com))

## **Number of Consumers Visiting Travel Sites Up 35 Percent in 2005**

Similar findings were reported by comScore Networks, showing 150 million consumers visited a travel Web site in 2005, a 35 percent increase over the previous year. Annual online travel revenues exceeded \$60 billion in 2005, representing a 20 percent increase versus 2004, with all travel segments posting gains. Consumers have been slowly migrating from online agencies to branded airline, hotel or car rental supplier sites. However, both online agency and supplier sites are growing, with agencies posting a 19 percent gain versus 2004 and suppliers recording 21 percent growth. Branded supplier sites captured approximately 57 percent of online travel dollars in 2005, up from 55 percent in 2004. Supplier sites, which accounted for 53 percent of airline ticket sales in 2003, have grown in popularity in recent years to capture 58 percent of airline ticket sales in 2005. A similar pattern has emerged in the hotel segment, where supplier sites have grown from a 52 percent share in 2003 to 59 percent in 2005, with the growth from 2004 to 2005 being particularly strong. (Source: comScore)

## **TripAdvisor Second Most Visited Travel Domain**

TripAdvisor(TM), the largest global travel information and advice destination on the web, has become the second most visited travel domain worldwide, featuring over 4 million reviews and opinions from travelers around the globe. TripAdvisor also launched graphical advertising capability for its advertiser network and TripAdvisor Inside for its travelers, becoming the first comprehensive travel site to deliver wiki functionality. (Source: Expedia)

## **New USA Travel Guide to Debut in January**

For the first time in more than a decade, the U.S. will finally have its own travel guide, featuring every state and territory, in a format its publishers say will inspire travel to the U.S. Small World Publications will publish 1 million copies of the guide ready for distribution throughout Europe in early January. Available in English, French, German and Italian, the guide will be tailored to a European audience and is seen as a resource for both consumers and the trade. The USA Travel Guide will be distributed in partnership with Visit USA Committees throughout Western Europe. Advertisers in the guide will be offered presence on the companion Web site [www.eUSATravelGuide.com](http://www.eUSATravelGuide.com), that will launch with the publication of the magazine in January. Like the magazine, the site will be available in four languages. Details at 425-289-3462. (Special to Travel Advance)

## **AAA Predicts Busiest July 4th Ever**

AAA predicts record travel for the upcoming Fourth of July holiday weekend. AAA estimates that 40.7 million Americans will travel 50 miles or more from home this holiday, a 1.2 percent increase from the 40.2 million who traveled last year. Of those travelers, about 85 percent, or 34.3 million, will travel by car, light truck or RV. Another 4.6 million plan to travel by plane, about the same as last year. Ocean and beach vacations top the list of preferred destinations this holiday weekend. More than a quarter of the total Fourth of July travelers expect to stay in a hotel or motel, while 40 percent plan to stay with friends or relatives. Holiday auto travelers will find an average price of gasoline of \$2.86 a gallon--down 3 cents from a month ago and about 72 cents higher than a year ago. (Special to Travel Advance: Pages 1A, USA Today; C4, Wall Street Journal; [www.ModernAgent.com](http://www.ModernAgent.com))

## **Radisson Fort McDowell Receives Coveted Four-Diamond Rating from AAA**

The Radisson Fort McDowell Resort has won another coveted award. AAA announced on June 27 that the 247-room hotel and conference center has won a four-diamond rating. The Radisson Fort McDowell has received the sought-after rating just six months after it opened in December 2005, says General Manager Greg Carrish. The Radisson Fort McDowell shares its four-diamond rating with fewer than 30 other properties in the entire state. AAA awards a four-diamond rating to properties that "include an extensive array of amenities combined with a high degree of hospitality, service, and attention to detail." Visit <http://www.fortmcdowelldestination.com/> for more on Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and the Fort McDowell Resort Destination. (Press Release, 6/28)

---

\*\*\*If you do not wish to receive this and other e-mail communications from the Arizona Office of Tourism, please reply to this e-mail with the message "Unsubscribe AOT in Action."

If someone has passed this along to you and you wish to subscribe, just reply and put "subscribe" in the subject line.

If you have any comments on how to make this newsletter better or more informative, please hit reply and type "comment" in the subject line.

Past issues of the newsletter are available online at [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).